1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

602 He was a quick-witted lad, and he saw at once what we had in mind. He said with a laugh, "You are asking about my true, true mother, the one who made me? It is not this one, and it is not Tita, who made me. It is Kutai."

"But who are the other two?"

"They are her sisters."

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593 Yet the family life of the Bush Negro does not differ in any essential respect from that of any other group of individuals, who, related by close ties of blood, live their lives together. Men and women marry and beget children, and their children in turn marry and beget others. In reality, but for the fact that a man or a woman claimed more than one father and mother, and a great number of brothers and sisters, of uncles and aunts, there was little to indicate the existence of conventions of family life which differed radically from those we ourselves know.

None the less, there were differences, and, once we were permitted to see beneath the surface, a slight incident here, another hint there, threw into relief the life of these people, and their own attitudes toward their actual and spiritual relationships.

Let us take the instance of Misomba and his son. Misomba was a man of middle age, and the incident we tell occurred as we were sitting in his house in a village above the Mamadam. He was speaking of the wood he had cut and of his plans to take it to the city to sell. With him in the house were his wife and a young lad, perhaps fifteen or sixteen years old, and, besides ourselves, our paddler Kasanya, who was Misomba's wife's elder brother.

"I need someone to take the rafts down the river. There are none in my family who are free, and I need help. But Adyabu here," he said, indicating his son, "knows about taking down rafts, and it will be good for him to learn more of the river leading to the white man's city. I am glad you came, brother-in-law. Now I can ask you if he may go with me. Is it your wish that he go?"

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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Kasanya glanced at the boy, who showed by his manner his eagerness to accompany his father, and then at his sister. "How will it be with you, sister, if Adyabu goes? Do you want him to go with Misomba?" 593 607

"Yes," she replied. "Misomba will care for him. Let him go."

The three older people talked over the details of the trip down the river, until it was made clear to all that Adyabu would share whatever money his father might receive for the lumber.

"You will treat him well, brother-in-law," said Kasanya, with a smile, "for in a few years his girl will be ripe for marrying, and he will need money for a fine wedding."

That night we talked this over with Kasanya.

"Why must a man ask another if he may take his own son with him on a journey? Is a man not to be trusted to take care of a boy he himself has made?"

"You do not understand, Bak'a. It is not that we don't trust Misomba," he replied. "He has lived with my sister for many years. She is his first wife, and my family have always liked him. When my sister's eldest daughter was asked in marriage by a man of this village, and our great family came together here to consider whether we should promise her to him or not, we asked Misomba to give us his advice. Misomba does not have a bold face. He did not speak until after much urging. To ask a man's advice about what does not concern his own family is a great honor. But we did this, and when he spoke, we found that what he said was good. So, you see, it is not that we do not trust Misomba." [554]

We encouraged him to explain further. 604 428

"Adyabu is not his heir. He is the child of my sister and belongs to my family. I am the one to say what he is to do and what he is not to do, because I am the oldest living brother. Adyabu does not belong to Misomba's family. He is of my blood. When I die, he will inherit my possessions. When Misomba dies, his possessions will go to his own

Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1958-1959) 1934
SRF Bush Negroes SRF
Saramacca

"If it is the man who is dead, then the woman takes her girl children to live with her, but her sons she sends away to live elsewhere. A man's spirit will not harm his daughters. He loves them. But his sons, he will kill. . . . When a woman dies, then it is the sons that the man will keep with him in the house, and the daughters must go away. The yorka of a woman will protect her sons, but she will destroy the daughters when she visits the place where she once lived."

5

To her child the Bush Negro mother gives at birth membership in all her own blood groups. The child is of her *wosu*, or household. He belongs to her *mbe*, or great family, which is an aggregate of many households. He is a member of her *lo*, or clan, which is composed of a number of great families, and which holds political away over a given portion of the land. The tie of all these groupings is a blood tie, a common female ancestress who lived long ago, or several women, daughters of the same mother, who had been the first to live with the runaway ancestors here in the bush, or several women who came from one people in Africa, and were the first to bear children to the rebels in the jungle. Every legal, every economic implication which this tradition of descent and inheritance through the female line might hold, is faithfully adhered to.

The mother does indeed count, as the tales told us in the city insisted. But what of the father?

That the Bush Negro understands fully the rôle that both father and mother play in the procreation of the young was everywhere apparent. The wood carving which a father made for his young daughter had designs on it of the kind which bore the general designation "*womi ko' muye*—man and woman." Whatever the traceries on the carvings given by a man to his woman during courtship, or after marriage, whatever animals might be represented, the essential symbolism was that of fertility, and the

J. Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1929-1930) 1934
Bush Negroes
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figures of a male and a female in congress were often introduced into the design.

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The ignorance of the physical rôle of the male parent, said to exist among other primitive peoples with a similar linkage of relatives on the mother's side, is not found among the Suriname Negroes. At a religious ceremony in which townspeople alone were dancing, a woman turned to us, and said, "Now they are dancing Afrekete. When *Ma Aiso*—an Earth goddess—and *Pa Lebba*—he who guards the crossroads—make a child, it is called Afrekete." Similar genealogies of spirits were vouchsafed us by Bush Negroes as well, and always, there was the male god as well as the female, and always the recognition that both made the spirit which was their offspring.

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These are examples derived from the art of the people, from their ritual, and from the concepts they have of the forces that actuate the universe. There also were many incidents to show the attitude of fathers and children toward each other in the everyday run of life.

Awingu did not hesitate when he answered that the child who was with him belonged to his wife. But he added that it was he who made him, and his affection for the little boy, and the child's fondness for him was apparent even to the casual onlooker. Kasanya, in talking to us about the kunu of his wife's family which had destroyed his sons, mourned them as a father. He had made them, and he had taught them to run the rapids, and to carve. He had given them his own gods to protect them, he told us when recounting the tragedy of the kunu which killed them. Misomba, the brother-in-law of Kasanya, had made Adyabu. There was no ambiguity about who the boy's father was. The boy was Kasanya's heir, but he was Misomba's son. Sedefo had brought the child to his brother Zimbi's coffin, saying, "I bring you your child. Try to protect him. . . ."

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There was the matter of slipping. It is dangerous to slip. Losing one's step may bring the soul to the ground in an unguarded moment, where the earth spirits, or what

M. Herskovits & Herskovits E-6 (1929-1930) 1934
Std Sub Negroes Std
Surinam

This was not the only instance of our meeting an individual who liked to stay in her father's village. There was the girl Takuda. Her mother was of the Kasito clan, and her house was in Dahomey, its principal settlement. She was not happy among her mother's people, and when we met her, she was living with her father's family. 593

"Does her mother's family not want her with them?" we asked a friend with whom we were discussing her.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Should not a child live in her father's home if she wants to?" he answered simply. "A father likes his children, and they like him, too."

Nor was it strange. To the child, the father was a man of the older generation to whom he could come for sympathy. He rarely corrected, for this was the task of the mother and her family. Often it was he who interceded with the older people in behalf of a son who wished to do something which his maternal family opposed. If a father gave small gifts to his children, they were looked upon truly as gifts. The ritual obligations of gift-giving chiefly lay with the mother's side. [431]

But there was more than just the affection for a boon companion which children felt for their fathers. There was pride in the father, pride in his achievements, and identification with his village.

When the Granman told us he was arranging for us to visit the village across the river from his own, he said, "Today you will see my father's house. Let them shoot guns so that I may know when you arrive in my father's village. They will show you everything. It is a fine village," he ended, with pride. "It is my father's country."

The last phrase was a refrain which ran through our entire visit there.

"This is the village of the Granman's father," we heard, again and again. "This is the house of the father of the Granman," one said, and another, "This is where the father of the Granman would sit in krutu." This person and that were introduced as belonging to the family of the father of the Granman. The climax came when we were shown the shrine to the ancestors. An especially elaborate [998]

Herskovits & Herskovits X-5 (1933-1952) 1934
323 Bush Negroes 323
Surinam

place was pointed out to us. The carved representation of the human face of the image was worked more carefully than is ordinarily done. Here the white clay was applied more thickly. The white cloth hanging from its stick was larger than we had ever seen before, the offerings of food and bottles and calabashes more numerous than at other ancestral shrines.

"This is where the yorka of the father of the Granman comes," we were told.

But why the father? What of the mother, the parent to whom the Granman was related? This village did not even belong to the Matchau clan to which he himself belonged. Yet with the pride that this was the shrine to the spirit of the Granman's father went a realization of its importance. Here was something outside the legal order, something which transcended the facts of descent and the theory of relationship. It was becoming ever more evident that in this "matriarchate" the father did count.

6

The inheritance of the father's kunu was one instance where the father needed to be taken very much into account. "If this man's children should take some of his goods," they had said, pointing at things we could see through the slats of the dead man's treasure house in the village of Opoku, "they will get his kunu, too. No man wants that."

Then there was the *trefu*, or *tchina*—taboo—as it was called in the bush, of which our cook had told us. Every individual in the bush had his tchina. Everyone knew the things he must not eat, or must not do. One man had to abstain from eating *anumara*, the great fish of the river. Another might never sleep in the open without a roof over his head. Should he find himself out in the bush with night coming, he must stop early enough to erect a small shelter and thatch it that his head might be covered when he slept. Bayo, we soon learned, might not eat food out of the cooking pot, and Sedefo could not bathe in a creek. Kasanya

Herskovits & Herskovits R-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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609 784 But when one man shares a tchina with another it does not mean that they only share prohibitions. There are privileges as well. There is the right to lift a *kandu*, for example.

789 The outsider among the Bush Negro people cannot go long without learning of kandu. Many times we had noticed a small bundle of twigs hanging from a nail over a doorway of an uninhabited hut, or had remarked a small strip of colored cloth and a feather or two knotted together and swinging from an orange tree, or a calabash filled with hardened sacred clay, suspended from a limb where a creek entered the river. When we asked about them, we learned that each was a kandu, a spiritual lock, which by the potency of the magic put into it by the maker protected the house, or the tree, or the fishing creek—whatever we happened to be discussing at the moment—from thieves. It was a guard which no man dared violate.

Bayo had made one for us early in our visit to the Suriname bush.

"I will make you something to keep away thieves. I will make you a kandu."

He had asked us for a needle, and from wood of a special kind which is used only in kandu he fashioned the representation of a human head. Some native fiber and two kinds of sacred grass held the needle and the carved image together. This he covered with white clay, the sacred pemba, and the red coloring of the kuswe plant, which is also sacred. When he had spoken his invocations, and dipped the kandu in the river to purify it, he brought it to us.

"Put it where you keep your money. I have put strong magic into it. Your possessions will be safe. Anyone who opens the chest and sees this, will not touch what is inside. . . . But do not eat out of a cooking pot. It will lose its power. I have given it my own tchina."

But it seemed that a kandu did not always remain inviolate.

[593] "It would not be good," Bayo explained, "if a man went away and left a kandu over the house, and no one but he

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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could enter it until he took the kandu away. Suppose a man went to hunt, and a friend came back to the village with a message from the hunter to get something inside the house. If no one at all could get it, it would not be good."

"What happens then?"

"The friend would seek out the man's own child—a child the man himself had made—and ask him to lift the kandu."

"Suppose his wife lifted it? Or his sister's child?"

"They wouldn't. The spirit in the kandu would punish them. His true, true child could touch the kandu, and his brother, or his sister, or his brother's children," said Bayo.

"The sisters' children?" we asked again.

"No, no! They would lift their own father's kandu."

Was there anyone else, we inquired, who could remove the kandu from a man's house?

Bayo considered. "Anyone who is born with the same tchina can lift it," he said, finally. "Those with the same tchina have the same fathers. Those whose fathers are the same, a kandu cannot harm."

7

We were talking one night with some men of the Anago clan.

"Is it true," asked one, "that in the Negro country there are great warriors, and many wars?"

In olden times, we said, it was true, but today the African peoples were at peace.

"So it is now on the Saramacca River," he replied, but with a laugh he added, "Sometimes there are quarrels."

For instance, there had been a quarrel on the river not very long ago over lumber which had been cut by members of one clan on land belonging to another. The men knew they had no right to the timber, but they cut it down. The first time they were warned, and fines were demanded. The second time it happened, however, the men of the clan who owned the bush where these trees stood surprised the trespassers, and beat them.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1834
SRS Bush Negroes SRS
Saramacca

698 "Yes," the man went on, "and there was much trouble." The men who had been punished incited their entire clan to come to their aid in an attack on the clan villages of those who had chastized them. "But now they are at peace." Those who were beaten were of his own clan, he said.

"And did you win your fight? What happened after that?"

"I did not go with the men. The land where the trees stood belonged to my father's clan, and my father's people I would not fight."

"What did you do?"

"I tried to make peace between them. That is what a man does when his father's clan and his mother's clan have trouble. But I was too young to speak in the big krutu—the assembly of the chiefs—so it was the elders of the Nyamfai people who brought them together, and settled the matter."

There was a point which we wanted cleared up. What was the attitude of the group toward a man who did not enter into a fight which concerned his own clan?

"Did no one say you ought to fight, too?" we asked, explaining our question to the man several times.

"No, why should they? A man can't fight against his father's people. Everybody knows that."

"But what if you did?"

"The gods would turn against my side."

After our return down river, when we again sat in the hut of the headman of the Gankwe clan, we turned to him with some questions about the family, and he gave us the following summary.

593 614 424 604 "From our mother we get our *lo*, our clan, and our *mbe*, our great family. Our mother's brothers are those we must obey. They correct us when we do wrong. They tell us what is good. In our mother's village is our true home, and from there we are buried when we die. But our father is our friend. He gives us his advice. From him we get many of the gods we dance to when we are men, and from him we

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

get the tchina which, if we do not break them, will let us stay healthy. Both our parents care for us."

He thought for a moment, and then, with a laugh, he wondered as Awingu had wondered that early morning at the planting ground.

"Is it not so in your country, Bak'a," he said, "that you ask me so often about these things?"

8

"Massa cow," we heard Bayo call out again and again to his great-grandfather Bibifo, when he wanted to indicate to the old man that he knew what he was about. Bibifo accepted the reproof with unvarying meekness and good humor.

This relationship between them puzzled us. Yet the other men, overhearing Bayo's brusque words to Bibifo, made nothing of it. Before strangers, Bayo was subdued, shy. He stuttered ceremonially when he addressed a man of rank. He pitched his voice only a little above a whisper when he was in a strange village. Toward Kasanya and Sedefo and Asikanu he was respectful, and showed reserve. When he wanted his hair trimmed he came to Angita for help, or, better still, to the young man at the prow of Kasanya's boat who, like Kasanya, was of his own clan.

The old man was not a forceful fellow. That was, perhaps, the reason, we thought at first. Then we wondered if it was not because Bibifo had become Adrian, and no longer wore obias to carry him well on the water—because he had forsaken the old gods. But the other men treated Bibifo with the respect due an old man. When Kasanya killed a monkey, and his own pole-man could not share it with him, because he was a twin and twins did not eat monkey, he turned to Bibifo with the pole-man's portion, and not to Sedefo, or to Asikanu, who was the brother of a clan head, and himself a possible successor to his brother's chieftainship.

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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him. He has taken boats up and down the Marowyne. He is my grandson. If I had one of my own blood, I would have had him accompany you. . . . But my sisters' children sleep," he ended, using the euphemism for death.

When we came to know the young man, we asked him about this incident with the Granman. Was he not afraid to interrupt him?

"Ma kye! But he is my grandfather! With my grandfather I make sport."

Again we went to the old men and sought in village after village for their own explanation of this behavior toward grandparents.

There were, we learned, age distinctions that were deeply felt. A man was on easy terms with those of his own generation. Between parents and children, and those of the generation of their parents, however, there was a definite code of behavior. For example, no young man or woman might talk of sexual matters with either parent, and this lack of sanction for frankness in sexual discussions with parents became an actual taboo with parents-in-law. Encounters with the "pai" and "mai," as they were known, were hemmed in by countless prohibitions. A man might not sleep in the same house with either of them, nor might he eat with them out of the same dish. If he met either of his parents-in-law as he went along the path, he had to turn aside, make way for them, and cover his face. He might not pronounce their names, nor might they speak his. These observances held for women, too, and the ones we mention were by no means all.

With grandparents, however, a vastly different situation obtained.

"He is my grandson. I call him mati—friend. I make sport with him!"

"She is my granddaughter. She calls me husband. She makes free with me!"

"She is my granddaughter, we talk about everything. She calls me kambo, and I call her kambo." Again, we

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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wash every day until Wednesday came to permit her to dance. When she washed with the sacred moistened clay, she rubbed the white on her children.

"Will all the women dance on Wednesday who have the same god as you?"

The child's mother shook her head. "If the god comes to them, yes. If he doesn't come, they can't dance."

And the bassia's wife said, "The women who are in the menstrual house can't dance. When they hear the drums, they are troubled, but they must remain quiet."

The woman had spoken too eagerly and too loudly, for her husband, overhearing her, said something in a low rapid voice, and at once the women fell silent and several of them remembered errands they had to see to.

4

"When men are in the council house, you mustn't interrupt," said the bassia's wife to the white woman. "If we did what you did just now, our husbands would scold us when they got home, and if we did it again, they would beat us."

She had taken upon herself all the prerogatives of friendship, and continually criticized the manners of her visitor.

The old were to be greeted last. A gift was to be received by another. When returning a piece of carving to another's hand, the carving should rest on the outstretched palm, while the elbow of that arm lay on the palm of the other hand. In the presence of men, a woman who took a stool should turn it about and sit on its narrower side.

"Never sit on the bare earth. The spirits don't like it," she said one instant, and the next, "Don't play with your fingers on top of your sun helmet. Your breasts will get long. Drumming is not a thing for women."

There had been other warnings during earlier visits to Bush Negro villages, but none had borne down so heavily upon the shortcomings of the stranger.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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him, and what he could get on the Marowyne in a year, it would be possible for him to see to it that his betrothed had all the gifts that a man of position gave to his woman. There were, too, other things to bear in mind. Already he had seen a girl who would make a desirable second wife, but that would require still more money.

"But, Bayo," we interposed, "we saw your mother at Djamungo. She told us your girl will not be ready for marrying for some time."

"Did she say that? Did she tell you that I am still a child?"

"What's the matter, Bayo? Don't you like her?"

"Awa, I like her. Not too much. She likes to talk."

We thought it politic to give the subject a new turn. Close beside Bayo lay the dog that had accompanied him the first time he came to us here, before our journey up the river. His was a curious color, a faint pinkish hue which puzzled us.

"What is the color of your dog, Bayo?"

"He is white when he does not have obia on him. He is a hunting dog. Tross is his name. He will stay with me. The obia comes off when he goes into the river."

We laughed. "Does Tross hunt in the river, Bayo?"

"No. In the bush. But if I leave him behind, he swims out to my canoe."

Tross was to become better known to us as the days went on. He had a great affection for his master, and this feeling extended to all those who appertained to Bayo. After Bayo had attached himself to our camp, we, too, came under the aura of his dog's regard, though this may have been made the more reasonable by the fact that the netting of the mosquito guards of our hammocks appealed to Tross as a comfortable place to spend the night. He was a good watchdog, and sometimes we were awakened by his low growl, and a voice saying "*Cho!*—Be quiet!" Just now we were interested in the cord about his neck, and we asked Bayo about it.

"It is more obia. It is strong, too. Nothing happens to Tross when he goes in the bush. You will see."

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

114 prejudices about sex and marriage may become less rooted by a comparison with the customs of a primitive society.

611 The Djukas, like a number of other primitive tribes, reckon
428 descent only through the female line; property rights are transmitted through the maternal side of the house. Fatherhood is a fact of relative unimportance.

595 Polygamy is the practice. Each wife lives in a separate hut (often in a separate village), which belongs to her because her husband built it for her. A man has as many wives as he wants, or can keep. The wives get along together fairly
[152] amicably. The cancer of matrimonial jealousy characteristic of our own system, is of narrow range and effect among the Djukas.

596 The head of the family is not the father, but the mother's
604 oldest male relative—her brother or her mother's brother. *The father is technically unrelated to his children.* As a matter of biological fact, he can never be sure of his paternity, whereas maternity is never in doubt. All children belong to their mother's family, and are subject to the authority of her brother or her maternal uncle. The latter is more closely related to them than any other male.

611 A group of families related through the female line con-
614 stitute a *m'beh,* and several m'beh together make up a *lo,* or clan. These groups are all reckoned through the mother. Husband and wife may belong to different m'beh and lo, but children of the union belong only to their mother's group. At
593 first sight the father seems negligible in this arrangement,
604 but it must be remembered that he is very likely the brother

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

of some other woman, and exercises authority over her children rather than over his own.

The Djuka family, then, consists of a group of people all descended from a single woman, and related to each other through the female line. Whatever family authority exists resides in the mother's or grandmother's brothers; to them the children defer; from them the children will inherit property and title. The paternity of the children is unessential. This type of social organization is called matrilineal.

We should, perhaps, not expect to find romantic love, as we know it, among the Djukas. The peculiar transports and attenuated delights of romantic passion are a rather extraordinary phenomenon which, according to Briffault, does not exist outside of Western civilization. Romance requires a high development of individuality among women so that one may be desirable above all others. Where women are mutually interchangeable, romance cannot exist. The Djuka black does not love a woman; he loves women. Love among the Djukas is not a brainstorm but a physiological release, and marriage an economic device.

The young people have complete knowledge and some experience of sex at an extremely early age and are usually married at sixteen or seventeen. They are fairly promiscuous before marriage and extremely so afterward. This, again according to Briffault, is the rule in tribes retaining the matrilineal tradition. Since intercourse before marriage is a practice that the Djukas make little effort to restrain, sex is a common affair, not particularly connected with marriage.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

Marriage requires a bride price, consisting of pieces of cloth, sugar, tobacco, and some carved wooden implements, such as combs, paddles, trays. These are handed over to the bride's family as presents. Then the wife simply moves into her husband's hut, or he into hers. Despite their pre-marital promiscuity, it is said that on the bridal night all the inhabitants of a Bush Negro village will gather outside the hut to hear what the husband has to say regarding the bride's virginity. If the girl is not a virgin, part of the bride price may be refunded, at the husband's discretion. The gathering on such an occasion is attended by much jocularity.

The Djuka husband builds a hut for each one of his women and has another for himself, to which he may retire whenever he feels the need of bachelor seclusion. The woman sleeps in her own hut, cooks, and raises her children there. The husband comes to her when he wants to, and leaves her for another wife when impulse so guides him. She seldom quarrels with the other wives, who may even live in separate villages.

Each wife has her own provision ground, where she grows rice and cassava; her husband has cleared it for her. The cassava fields are owned by individual women, but are held in very loose tenure. At harvest time, or when a plague of insects is threatening, the women of several households work together in common.

The man's hut is called his *gudu oso*, or "treasure house." It serves to impress his women with his importance and wealth. They are forbidden to enter it, but, woman-like, they insist on peeping in. So he keeps many boxes and wood carv-

/15 cont./

585 white cotton sleeping blanket, various colored cloths and pantjes,
[583] some earthenware, such as bowls and plates, iron pots and pans, and the like, while he is obligated on the occasion to provide for an ample supply of strong drink and sugar wine.

They do not have festivities, games, or dancing in connection with their marriages.

586 If a marriage is dissolved, then each of the two parties again goes to his own family; in case those concerned in it and the elders disapprove of this, however, it happens that man and wife are forced to continue to live with each other, especially when there are no substantial reasons and grievances.

● 593 The man is obligated to provide his wife or his wives with food, clothing, and ornaments; she, to follow the man everywhere, to cook for him, to wash, and to take care of the housekeeping.

264 The wives are neat in an exemplary fashion; plates, bowls,
252 and pans are always kept extremely clean, and they also see to it that everything is extremely clean in connection with cooking.

841 If they find themselves in a period of menstruation, they
302 indicate this immediately to the husband by withdrawing from his dwelling and staying in seclusion with other women; they neither cook nor do the least thing for him in this state, do not even come within sight of him, and remain secluded to the end; when they have cleaned and dressed themselves, they decorate their shoulders and arms with white stripes as a token /16/ that they have again
[386] returned to their normal state. The stripes are made by mixing
[824] pounded adroe (1) with ground chalk and water.

1. A tuberous root-stalk from the Cyperus rotundus L.

Sometimes they also smear the forehead and the neck in this way and appear thus before their husbands.

841 During their seclusion another woman, who is a member of
571 the family or possibly a female friend, daily prepares and brings the
252 food, which, however, is at the expense of the secluded wife. They perform this service for each other mutually.

/137 cont./

241 and sugar cane, while in the third year some pineapples, bananas, and sugar cane are also harvested.

Thereafter one surrenders the ground to the second growth (kapoeweri) shooting up, here called "kauwé," and to the weeds, like the cutting grass "baboen nefi" (Scleria secans), which prevent further growth of the cultivated crop.

This system of clearing grounds requires much land. It is a severely predatory cultivation which can only be employed when sufficient free land is available. Only after many years can one return to the same piece of forest to lay out a new ground, depending on the recovery of the forest, more particularly on the top growth.

[592] Among the Bush Negroes of the Marowijne it is [redacted]e that
[476] each household provide for itself. The man clears the ground with help of family /familie/ members or friends, who in return for food are taken in during this time. If the man has /138/ one wife, then ordinarily two grounds per year are cleared; if he has more than one wife, then he clears two grounds for each wife.

[622] The captain /kapitein/ of a village lays out his ground him-
[643] self, helped by his villagers. The granman /chief/, however, does not work himself, but, regardless of the number of his wives, has his family and other helpers clear grounds in return for food for the
423 workdays. The products of the grounds of a household are not joint
● 593 property, but rather the wife asserts her rights over the produce from one ground, while the man claims that from the other ground. Thus a distinction is made between the agrarian property of the wife and that of the husband.

3. The Plague of Ants and the Ant-bushes

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825 In the agriculture of the Bush Negroes the plague of ants plays a significant role. The leaf-cutting or parasol ants (Atta sexdens and Atta cephalotes) are very destructive because of their attacks on the leaves in the plantings. The first-named species is the greatest evildoer in the interior districts of Surinam. Cassava in

/510 cont./
relatives, nor any power of the man over the woman, nor even household cohabitation. The man and the woman each reside in the village of their maternal kin. The man goes to live with his wife from time to time, providing her with the imported commodities that she needs, notably salt, kerosene, cloth, and utensils, and felling trees for the clearings which she will exploit for the benefit of the household.

Divorce is entirely free. Unions are not very stable, mainly on account of the woman. Numbers of women are divorced four to five times during their lives.

The grand man, chief of the tribe, exercises over the Boni a power which is more religious than political.

The Boni are a pirogue-people. For more than a century they have been living by using their canoes for the benefit of gold-seekers and exploiting miners. The decline of gold extraction is depriving them more and more of their traditional resources. Some of them are emigrating temporarily to the coastal lumberyards. But all of them remain faithful to their villages and to their customs.

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The Oayana Indians (Roucouyennes /Rucuyen/). These Indians of the Caribe /Carib/ ethnic group have had only a few direct contacts with European civilization and still represent without alteration the human type which populated Guiana before the arrival of the Europeans. On encountering the Refugee Blacks, the Indians of the Guianese forest have been steadily and rapidly declining. Estimated at 30,000 at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Indians of French Guiana are now no more than about a thousand. In addition there must be included in this number 700 persons (Galibi and Arawak) who have been protected by their habitat in the savannas of the coast where malaria is less deadly than in the interior.

The accounts of travelers and the censuses made notably in 1730, 1759, 1787, and 1815 allow one to follow with precision this destruction of the autochthonous population since the first settlement of the Europeans in Guiana (2).

2. Dr. André Sausse, op. cit., pp. 67-98.

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125 --158 (80%) answered with good grace;

--33 (17%) answered with reticence or gave contradictory answers in 1956 and 1957. Checking showed that they neglected to mention a living child, generally one of their older ones whom they were not raising themselves. In spite of the precautions taken, there are some omissions in the census of the adolescents and young people because of this (7).

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> 7. On the other hand, we never ascertained any dissimulation concerning dead children. On the contrary, the Boni women speak of their deceased children with a certain indifference.

For 28 of these women we were able to reconstruct their lives with sufficient precision by interrogating contradictorily the husbands and the older brothers of the same mother. The five others were eliminated;

7 (3%) obstinately refused to answer without giving any justification for their attitude.

[484] Eighteen women could not be added, this being due to the continual moving of the Boni between their villages, their crop plantings, and their fishing places.

We took into account 7 women who died before 1957, whom we had been able to question in the preceding years.

[163] All in all, we have preserved 193 records of women having had 747 children, of whom 472 had survived as of the first of January 1958.

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[For additional demographic and social information, see the "Table of the Population of the Boni Villages," on pp. 479-539, category 116. Included are data on the number of children per woman, the number of deaths by age and sex, the name of the guardian (usually, but not necessarily a parent) who was responsible for raising a particular individual, personal names of the Boni, marital residence and residence changes by specific individuals, marriage practices, including polygynous unions and secondary marriages, cases of divorce, and lineage/sib affiliations of each individual.]

/30 cont./

1st. Lo = de facto grouping of rebels of any provenance, which has in the long run split up into lineages but which remains in the form of a common worship;

2nd. Lo = lineage, from the very beginning.

Conceptions Relative to Kinship and Marriage

[121] Ties between the individual and the ancestors. Before examining more deeply the social and family structure of the Refugee Blacks, it is indispensable to study what religious ties are implied between [184] the individual and the ancestors. Here one is in the presence of basic beliefs which seem identical in the various tribes of Refugee Blacks of Guiana and of which their structure is the consequence.

In the civilizations of Blacks Africa it is supposed that a [171] current of life and /31/ strength circulates from the divinity to men through the medium of the ancestors. Among the Refugee Blacks it is taken for granted that in this respect each man is bound [782] to his ancestors through the maternal line only. If he falls prey to illness, injustice, or adversity, he can call only on them in his prayer.

593 That does not mean that the tie with the father is ignored [827] or considered as having little importance; it is taken for granted, as we shall see, that in the creation of man certain psychic elements are transmitted from father to son. But the current of strength binding the individual to the ancestors does not pass through the father. One cannot pray usefully to the soul of one's dead father. [755] If I am sick and divination incriminates the action of my dead [782] father's soul, I cannot address either prayer or offering directly to him; for that I shall have recourse to one of his near relatives in the maternal line.

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601 They continue to use the terms soagi, pay, may even after the break-up of a marriage, so that they are in frequent usage. As for the woman herself, they say sa So-and-so in speaking to her, as to a sister.

581 Marriage. The conceptions of the Refugee Blacks on this subject are remarkable. Marriage in the African sense of the term, understood as a contract between two groups of relatives, does not exist among them. The union of the man and woman does not involve any sort of contract between their groups of relatives and consequently entails no matrimonial compensation. /35/ The Refugee Blacks are the only African Negro population to our knowledge whose customs do not involve any form of "dowry" either in money or in kind.

582 Family life in the sense that we understand it does not exist; as we shall see further on, marriage is forbidden between people of the same lineage, which implies that the husband and wife live in different villages. The man builds a house for his wife in her native village, but he does not come to live with her; he makes visits of several days to her as to his other wives, in the course of which he furnishes her with the imported objects (salt, kerosene, cloth, etc.) she needs, lends her his aid for heavy chores, while, for her part, she turns over to him the products of the clearing. The rest of the time he lives as a bachelor in his mother's village where he builds his own house. If he is very attached to his wife, he can come to reside with her and can even succeed without great difficulty in bringing her to live in his own village; but few couples take advantage of this option, for the man and wife prize their independence above everything else.

593 The life of the man and of the wife remain entirely separate and their union has more the character of a temporary association founded on material interests than that of a marriage; the family life of each one remains entirely centered around his or her matrilineage.

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593 This organization, compared with what is found in the greater part of Africa, is very advantageous for the wife, who [581] enjoys total independence. But against this she has great instability of unions.

581 601 The union of man and woman has so little of the character of a marriage that in the Boni language no word exists which means, strictly speaking, "husband" or "wife." They say: mi libi anga X = "I live with So-and-so.

174 591 How has the social and matrimonial system of the Refugee Blacks been set up? One could believe that one of the systems of Western Africa was purely and simply transposed, but this is not the case at all. In this domain as in that of beliefs, the ancestors of the Refugee Blacks elaborated an original synthesis out of numerous sources.

The African nations from which the rebels issued were certainly, in large part if not in the majority, patrilineal. This is especially the case of the Fon of Dahomey, from whom have been borrowed important cultural elements, especially the principal cults of possession. The matrilineal ones all conceded patrilocal residence, that is, the wife's leaving her village and settling in her husband's village.

[175] The 18th-century rebels, the archives attest, included a heavy percentage of "salt-water Negroes," born on African soil; such, for example, was Codio Coromantin, one of Boni's lieutenants; those who had not been born in Africa had, for the most part, been instructed in an African tradition by a father or uncle. One can be sure that once having attained freedom they sought to organize their villages according to the family custom by which they had been brought up, that is, to set up, some a patrilineal and patrilocal society, others a matrilineal society /36/ but with [643] patrilocal residence. We know for example that Boni had chosen his son Agosu as his successor.

/122 cont./

846 834 856 Interruption of conjugal relations after the birth. For three months after delivery the mother must stay away from men and even avoid touching them. Conjugal relations must be interrupted until the child begins to walk alone (eleven to 14 months). However, it is tolerated (but disapprovingly) that they be interrupted only for the time until the child begins to drag himself [842] on his knees /123/ (eight months). They cite the example of Baïna's wife who has puny children after pregnancies at too short intervals.

846 834 862 178 593 Actually, the interruption of conjugal relations tends to be reduced more and more, the women having condensed milk available and tending to reduce the duration of breast feeding.

Each woman acts as she wishes in this respect; the husband has no power to restrain her.

The Name

551 553 Existence of several independent names. Each Boni has two names, the gaã nãm or big name, given by the father, and the pikin nãm or little name, given by the mother.

These two names are given in totally independent fashion. Generally the pikin nãm is given first; in former days they used to wait until the child was six to eight months old; nowadays it is given at the end of a few weeks. The head of the lineage does not intervene either in the choice or the giving of the name.

As a matter of fact, nearly three-quarters of the Boni are designated by one single name, either because the father and mother agreed to give the same name or because one of the two names fell into disuse.

To these two principal names may be added any number of names and cognomens given by the grandparents and later by friends or spouse; often one of the names ends by being given

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651 563 The only case in which custom governs the choice of name is that of twins.

Male twins are called Adam and Agou.*

Boy and girl twins are called Adam and Efa (2).

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2. This is connected with a myth derived from the Biblical tradition, which we shall set forth later.

Female twins are called Chimba and Sisi.

Social Relations within the Lineage

429 604 [593] Guardianship. Until he is old enough to work, the child is placed under the responsibility of the mother and, one step farther away, that of the eldest of his classificatory uncles. To a lesser degree all the uncles have authority over the child; guardianship is collective.

The custom of the Refugee Blacks, hostile to any division of the lineage, does not recognize any right peculiar to the mother's brothers (still, in fact, they seem to be consulted by [584] preference about matters of small importance). For serious matters, such as authorizing a marriage, the classificatory uncles meet and deliberate; they do not vote, strictly speaking, but the proved opposition of three or four of them causes the project to be abandoned.

429 593 604 [586] It is to the mother that people will come to complain about the child, and not to the father. She it is who decides to refer the thing to the uncles if it is serious (example of Doni, 18 years old, who deflowered Elina, 15 years old. Elina's mother came to complain to Doni's mother. Doni's mother went to notify her older brother Furiman, who took the matter in hand).

/126 cont./

429 604 It is necessary to distinguish this principal guardianship, which is imprescriptible, from the secondary guardianship delegated by the uncles to the man or woman charged with bringing up the child. /127/

429 593 604 (858) Designation of the guardian. When a child reaches five or six years, the mother and the uncles decide who will be charged with his education and will become his guardian. The thought of the Refugee Blacks is that a child is much better educated if he is isolated and placed directly under the responsibility of an adult.

429 593 604 603 In order to decide who will bring up the child, they do not have a general meeting of the lineage. Everything is arranged among the mother and her brothers proper, the maternal grandmother, and the great-grandmother if she is still living. The child's classificatory uncles are consulted only if there are no uncles in the ordinary sense. Grandmothers have a preponderant influence in this decision as they do in all that concerns the child during his early years. The uncles' influence increases as the child advances in age.

429 There is no precise rule for the devolution of this guardianship, and nobody can take advantage of a right over the child.

(604) The guardian, male or female, carries out the responsibility of the education, but he can make no decision without asking the opinion of the uncles, whose decision is final. The guardianship can always be withdrawn.

This guardianship is exercised by one single person, man or woman.

429 593 It is very often the mother. In a large number of cases the mother raises her children, boys and girls, alone, with the cooperation of her husband, who often is not the father. Actually the husband has no rights over them. Whether the children

/127 cont./

429 593 [586] are his or not, he maintains them indirectly by maintaining his wife. He has only precarious authority. Every connection with the children disappears in case of divorce.

429 603 [604] [593] Guardianship is often exercised by the maternal grandmother, by an aunt, or even by an older sister.

If the maternal grandmother (or the great-grandmother if she is still living) insists on bringing up a child, the mother cannot refuse; one sees a rather large number of cases of women who have only one child and have given it to their mother to raise; it is true that since they live together, it is not a great sacrifice for the mother.

429 603 888 [163] [165] Thus one sees women over 70 years old, having had ten children or so, bringing up three or four of their grandchildren. The ancestress of Asisi village, Kuluba († 1957), after having had 12 children, brought up about ten of her children and grandchildren during the course of her long existence; when she died in 1957 at 100 years of age, she was still raising a child, one of her great-grandsons 12 years old. Of course she had not been working any more for a long time and was fed by her family, as the child was. But it was she who held the power of guardianship over him.

429 593 If it is the father who is charged with the child's education, he takes him into his own maternal family. His sisters will help him to bring up the child as long as he needs the presence of a woman.

From then on the father will exercise guardianship corresponding to that which the mother usually exercises under the responsibility of the uncles.

Sometimes a man is seen bringing up a daughter. Generally speaking, if a man /128/ has had three or more children by one woman, it is considered normal for him to be given one to raise, but that does not constitute a right; he cannot demand anything.

/128 cont./

593 152 429 One of the commonplaces of ethnographic literature is the feeling of frustration that the father would experience in a matrilineal system when he is separated from his children. Thoughts heard every now and then could allow one to believe in the existence of such a feeling among the Refugee Blacks. For example Baïna, of Asisi village, tells us one day with bitterness: "I have had eight children, all living, and I have been given only one to bring up." But this is only a pretense. No Refugee Black thinks seriously of bringing up the five or six children he has had in the course of his life by three or four [469] different women. Besides, this would be materially impossible for him, considering the mode of life of the Refugee Blacks and the necessity for the adult men to move ceaselessly in search [163] of paid work. For example, by encouraging Baïna to tell the basis for his thought, it was not difficult to understand that he would have liked to raise two or three of his eight children (born of four different women), the ones he loved for subjective reasons; the others scarcely interested him and it was all the same to him whether they were brought up here or there.

429 152 [601] In reality the paternal feeling of the Refugee Blacks is a rather subjective thing; raising a son or a nephew is the same in their eyes. The same paternal feeling will develop, and in both cases they will say "my son" and "my father."

593 429 Mothers give their children to be raised with the greatest of ease, especially within the lineage.

[163] For example Eliana (Dju, F8), about 45 years old in 1957, who had nine living children, was raising only four:

△	Alibi	1937	raised by his father Matapi (Asisi-Aw.B.);
△	Boni	1939	raised by his maternal grandmother Bëniti (Dju, E5);
○	Aguba	1940	raised by Lèngs (F36), Eliana's classificatory sister (tenth-degree kinship);
△	A...	1943	raised by his father Yusu (Papalisson);

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○ S... 1947 raised by Kulina, Eliana's sister by the same mother (Dju. E9);

○ S... 1947 raised by her mother

and three young children raised by their mother.

[163] One sees unusual situations like that of Mimi (Boniville, Kotika), who gave her only child to her sister to raise and is bringing up another child in its place.

[163] In 1957, Téké (L1, F44, Loka village), who had seven living children, was not bringing up any of them.

△ C... 1945 raised by Mélita, Téké's mother (L1, E32);

△ A... 1947 raised by Akomédi (L1, F34), Téké's classificatory sister;

△ M... 1950 raised by Mélita;

△ C... 1952 raised by his father Baïna (Dip. II);

○ K... 1953 raised by △ Mato (Aw.B.1), her father. Baïna's father;

○ F... 1956 raised by Mélita. /129/

Baïna, whom we have known for a long time, was incapable of giving the least explanation for his wife's strange behavior. Besides, he had given up a long time ago understanding the psychology of Boni women.

On the other hand, a certain number of women obstinately refuse to be separated from their children, deciding to raise [163] them all, girls and boys, by their own means. This was the case for example with Magdaléna (Kormotibo), a woman of intractable character, who raised her eight children herself at [828] the cost of the worst difficulties. In such a case, they say of the mother that she is a selfish woman and that she has a bad character, but there is no question of taking a child away from her by force. Nobody would risk that, no more her brothers or uncles than the head of the lineage. Only her mother could do it, and the women who behave thus have generally lost their mothers.

/134 cont./

429 56 861 582 Until very recent times the authority of the guardian had remained very strong and was prolonged very late; he had the right to strike his ward to make him obey, and he exercised his powers until the time when, judging the child's education finished, he authorized him to marry, which formerly seldom happened before 25-27 years.

Fintiman (of Boniville), about 50 years old in 1958, tells that his father, entrusted with his upbringing, did not authorize him to marry before he was completely established as a carpenter and boat-builder, at about the age of 27. Until that age he remained subject to the most tyrannical authority; his father intended especially to forbid him to go out in the evening, and in order to carry on a clandestine affair he had to use nocturnal fishing expeditions as a pretext!

429 884 When a boy's guardian judges his education finished, he helps him to build his house and gives him tools, a trunk containing clothes, and a hammock. Henceforward the boy must make his own way in life.

429 576 601 All during his lifetime he will continue to show the greatest respect to the person who raised him and often, speaking of that person, he will say: "my father" or "my mother."

601 When a Refugee Black says in the course of a conversation, "My father used to do this," he often means the man who brought him up; if he wishes to speak of his true father, he will say, "My own father who made me." Likewise when he says "My grandfather," he usually means a great-uncle. This confusion makes research on family life risky as long as one does not possess any census by names; apparently it has led several authors into error, making them believe that among the Refugee Blacks the father brings up his children himself, when this is on the contrary the exception.

128 114 593

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429 The guardian continues to have a certain power all his life over his ward become adult. He is the conciliator to whom one applies first if there is any complaint about his ward.

This power of conciliation is bequeathed by the guardian at his death, as is the guardianship itself.

593 Role of the mother. For the Refugee Blacks, the sacred tie is
613 pre-eminently the one which attaches them to their mother and
152 through her to the ancestors of the lineage. It is manifested with respect to the mother by a delicate and deep feeling of affection which applies also, less directly, to the close relatives on the maternal side and to all the members of the lineage. It is not
[601] idly that within the lineage the men call one another brothers; the obligations /135/ they have toward one another are accepted by all with joy, and each tries his best to fulfill them, for he transposes to them the sentiment of love which he feels toward his mother.

114 The term matriarchy has often been used wrongly with re-
562 gard to the Refugee Blacks, letting people believe that the woman
593 exercises authority there; this is an error, the woman does not enter their councils and from a political point of view does not exist in their eyes; the woman has influence and authority only as mother, and over her own children.

593 The mother's authority remains very great over her sons after they have become men; none of them will undertake an important enterprise or leave for a long trip without consulting his mother; if she is absolutely opposed to the project, he will scarcely dare go on with it. We heard in December, 1952 a man of 45, M..., serious and intelligent, say to us with regret: "I would certainly go with you as far as Cayenne, but my mother does not wish it."

/135 cont./

593 The same year, G..., man of about 50, particularly serious and hard-working, had saved up enough to buy an outboard motor; his mother, aged near 75 years, advised him absolutely not to make this purchase, claiming that he would be the object of jealousy and was risking being the victim of evil spells; he gave up the project. He did not dare carry it out until [765] 1957 after the mourning for his mother (dead in 1955) had been lifted.

To let one's mother be in need is considered a shame; if a mother has several sons, they divide up the purchases to be made for her benefit; each year one of them will cut the clearing intended for the mother; in exchange she will furnish couac and vegetables as long as her strength will allow her to work.

591 Ordinarily each of the sons, when he becomes 20 or 25 years old, builds himself in his village a house in which he lives alone. But it often happens that a man who has reached adulthood continues to live in his mother's house; for example, in 1952 in Loka village, Ayaubédé, about 40 years of age, was living with his mother Chii.

593 As for the authority of the mother over her daughters, it is [582] still much more strict and lasts all her life. The daughter may not marry without the authorization of her mother or of her [591] female guardian if she is not brought up by her mother. The married daughter has the use of a house that her husband built for her, but this house is situated near that of her mother. Since household life is intermittent and reduced to its simplest expression, she remains under the domination of her mother until the latter's death. Especially, she cannot travel without her permission.

593 In former times the authority of mothers over daughters 178 was tyrannical; they say that one might see an octogenarian mother requisition an old man's arm to strike her sexagenarian daughter who had disobeyed her. But nowadays this authority is battered [579] down by the development of individualism. From this results a growing dissoluteness in the girls and an increasing instability of unions.

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593 428 The nature of the relations with the mother is shown by the custom of inheritance. /136/ If a man dies while his mother is still living, his belongings return to her. She may keep them or divide them among the members of the lineage.

593 Role of the father. The father has no power over the children, but in general he is respected by them and his sons make no important decision without asking for his opinion.

In the very frequent case where the guardianship of the children is entrusted to the mother, the father exercises a de facto authority as long as the family group lasts. But in case of its break-up he loses any right over the children.

In general the father loves his children very much, but in the way Europeans love their nephews, he avoids taking a hand too closely in their education, which is the responsibility of the uncles, who might invite him not to busy himself with family affairs.

593 429 591 But if the father has received the guardianship of one or several children, the situation is completely different. If the family group breaks up, he takes them along with him. Besides, as a general rule, even if he gets along well with his wife, he settles in his own village the children whose guardianship has been entrusted to him, close to his maternal family; henceforth it is he who will provide entirely not only for their maintenance but for their food; except for periods when the husband spends some time with them near his wife, the latter no longer has to feed them.

593 429 If the father has received the guardianship of a child, he can in turn delegate it under his responsibility to someone of his lineage. We have noted several examples of this practice. For example Afoondo (Aw.B.1, F56), about 23 years old in 1957, had been entrusted to his father Koniman (Lapé), who had himself turned him over to his own mother Awènkina.

593 429 769 591 /136 cont./ The fact that some children are under the guardianship of their father changes nothing about their position with respect to ancestor worship and does not entail any payment or compensation whatever on the part of the father. When the child has grown up he will be able to come back to live in his maternal kin group (which he does most often) or stay in his father's village. On this point there is no precise customary obligation.

593 884 The father plays an important role with respect to the children when they reach manhood; he procures their ɔbia for them and transmits the knowledge and magical powers which he himself received from his father.

429 428 Inheritance of guardianship. At the death of the guardian, his office is bequeathed in the same way as his goods and according to the same principle of dispersion of the inheritance. If he was raising several children, the guardianship of each one will be bequeathed individually.

For example Béniti († 1944) was raising ○K... 1944, daughter of her daughter Baïkom, and ○W... 1942, daughter of her son Fintiman and a woman of Papaïston village. She bequeathed the first to her daughter Kulina, the second to her daughter Baïkom settled in Loka village. W... thus found herself taken to a village which was neither that of her maternal nor her paternal relatives. Such cases are not rare. The child's uncles, who in principle could take back the guardianship, never seem to oppose, in practice, its being bequeathed. /137/

The spiritual power kept by the guardian over his ward after he becomes adult is bequeathed in the same manner. Thus, in the preceding example, Béniti († 1955) /sic/ bequeathed the spiritual tutelage she was keeping over each one of her adult sons and daughters whom she had raised herself, in part to outsiders to her lineage.

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582 Generally speaking, the custom of the Refugee Blacks used to consider as immoral the marriage of a very young girl to an old man, or of a very young boy to an adult woman. 588 178 The weakening of family morals is clearly demonstrated by two events which happened during the summer of 1960. A boy of thirteen and a half, K... of Boniville, left his guardian to join an Assisi woman, A..., 20 years older than he and with a very bad reputation to boot; some months later his example was imitated /146/ by a boy of 14 who began living with a [684] [613] woman of 29. Nothing like that had ever been seen, and people inveighed against the scandal of it; but in both cases, guardians and lineage heads showed themselves incapable of making their authority respected by force.

882 [562] Marriage of girls. It can still be said (although things are in the process of changing rapidly) that girls, kweyi umã, occupy a place apart in the thought of the Refugee Blacks; the reprobation which embraces women does not extend to them. 882 834 [291] People say that girls "have good manners," and in fact most of them, although naked except for a little apron, have a reserved attitude, a becoming bearing, which contrast with the attitude of the married women. To tell the truth, this virtue is not so much due to natural inclinations as to the strict [593] vigilance with which their mothers surround them. The mothers literally do not let them out of their sight and permit no man to speak to them out of their presence. "Until dawn, until the cock crows, she keeps vigil," says the song, alluding to the mother who watches over her daughter's virtue. If a girl [836] comes to lose her virginity without being properly married, [597] pɔti na ɔsu, "established in a house," it is a dishonor for her mother and her near relatives.

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882 [858] Whereas little girls before puberty are left free to come and go, older girls are the object of constant surveillance. They are always under the surveillance of one of their near [883] relatives specifically designated. If they have permission to go dancing in another village, they must present themselves upon arrival to an uncle, an aunt, an older brother who will watch over them all evening.

Sometimes they build for a girl a little house where she sleeps alone ... but she is double-locked into it for the night.

[883] At nightfall, when their mothers are busy with the preparation of the meal, the girls are sent to get water or to angle for fish; there is wavering in the surveillance, and seducers know how to profit by it.

[593] [584] [582] Until recent times girls were held by their mothers in the bonds of a strict authority, and although engaged very young, they were not authorized to marry before reaching complete physical development.

584 It often used to happen that a girl might be promised by her mother to a man from her first years (they still say, although that is no longer practiced, pɔti mɔfu na umã, "to put his mouth on a girl," meaning by that to have received a promise of marriage). This plan always used to remain subject to the girl's assent when she grew up and did not constitute a contract, strictly speaking; it did not involve any payment or compensa- [593] tion whatever. A girl could not be obligated to a marriage which was absolutely displeasing to her, but the mother's authority was great enough to make these marriages come about in most cases.

[431] If a girl had not been promised, the young man who wanted to marry her used to try to attract her attention during a dance and to exchange a few words with her. /147/ Later he would give her a paddle bearing symbols of fecundity and the representation of a house and a boat. If the girl accepted the paddle, he could propose to her officially.

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592 The household. Household life is a limited association, freely
593 agreed upon by two beings who live totally independent of each other, the emotional life of each remaining almost entirely centered upon his maternal family. It entails reciprocal duties:

--For the man, to build a house for his wife in her village, to construct a new boat for her every three or four years, to cut a clearing for her each year /150/ and help in planting it, to furnish her with imported commodities, cloth, salt, kerosene, tools, which she needs, as well as game and smoke-dried fish;

--For the woman, to farm the clearing and furnish her husband when he comes to visit her with couac and the vegetables
[462] necessary for his food. (The man, used to living as a bachelor, owns his own cooking utensils and most of the time prepares his meals himself.)

This system of intermittent conjugal life seems to assure the Boni a perfect balance at the same time that it permits them
[562] to satisfy their taste for change. The men divide their life among work, visits to their different wives, hunting and fishing expeditions; their life is thus constantly renewed and they are protected against tendencies toward apathy and mental inertia.

In general, as long as the union lasts, the woman fulfills
[241] exactly her obligations; although the yield from the clearing is
[422] her property and the excess of the harvest is sold for her ex-
[434] clusive benefit, the man is assured of getting from her all the provisions he needs. On the other hand, many men, through
[591] laziness, get out of constructing a house for their wives and the latter continue to live with their mothers. In the villages on the French bank about 20 such cases were observed in 1958.
591 Several cases are even noted in which a woman, aged but still
592 having unmarried children, one or two of her daughters and their children are living together in one house. For example, in Asisi village, nine persons were living together in the very small house of their mother and grandmother Tini.

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593 342 461 [198] Nothing marks better the small place the conjugal bond has in a man's life; imagine the torture which this forced living and crowding together represent for each of these women! The Boni of today, much richer than their ancestors and better equipped with tools, are singularly lazier in building houses; no longer is anyone seen to sculpture and decorate the façades lovingly; when a man, after many recriminations, decides to build a house for his wife, he is content most of the time now with a simple shelter with plaited walls, which does not require 30 days work.

595 As we have said, each man may take as many wives as he wishes, on condition that he can supply their needs; but in practice the maintenance of a household is so heavy a load that most men have only one or two wives; only one to our knowledge has three. In fact, it is contrary to custom to free oneself by paying for work which one must do for one's wife. We have never heard it said that a rich man (many of them have hundreds of thousands of francs in savings) paid money in place of a piece of work, or paid someone to do it for him. The furnishing of imported objects is particularly burdensome, especially cloth, kitchen utensils (Boni women are infatuated with aluminum objects), and occasionally jewels. The Boni conceded in 1958 that the maintenance of a wife amounted to 30 to 40 thousand francs a year at least. If one considers that a hard-working man earned about 120,000 francs a year, that he spent 30 to 40 thousand francs a year for himself, that he often had /151/ in addition to provide for the needs of his aged parents and share the expenses of the festivals of the lineage, one sees that he could not have more than two wives at the same time. As for less hard-working men, who have no more than 60 to 80 thousand francs a year in ready money, they have a great deal of trouble in facing the maintenance of a single household, and many divorces have no other cause.

593 [461] [556] [454] [439] [511] [434] [511] [695] [434] [511] [586]

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593 [591] [163] Among the Refugee Blacks some very devoted couples are seen, who spend their whole lives together and who, in their old age, have completely united their destinies, living in the same house, either in the woman's village or the man's: for example, in the village of Lapé Tabiki, Butu and his wife Asamani, in 1952 aged about 70 years, together for 45 years and having had eight children. But such cases are exceptional. Besides, they [581] are not admired and held up as an example as one might believe; this man and this woman suited each other, they remained together; if some day they no longer get along, they will divorce, that is all.

595 Polygamy. Polygamy in the African sense of the term, that is, the simultaneous maintenance of several regular households, is exceptional among the Refugee Blacks because of their mode of living:

[433] [511] --The wife is practically entirely dependent on her husband; an economy based mainly on wage earning and involving a relatively high standard of living makes it impossible for most men to maintain more than one household;

[461] --Even if a man had sizable financial means at his disposal, he could scarcely maintain more than two households; for it is not acceptable, at least nowadays, for him to have done by others the customary chores: clearings, boats, house.

162 595 On January 1, 1958 out of 134 men over 20 years old in the villages on the French bank, whose lives were well known to us, there were:

Men maintaining three households	1	1%
" " two households	18	13%
" " one household	104	77%
[589] Bachelors, widowers, or recent divorcés	11	8%
	134	100% /sic/

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586 As far as the clearing already cut and planted is concerned, if it is on the land of the wife's family, the man can demand nothing. However, some women continue to furnish couac for a year after breaking up.

If the clearing is on the husband's lands, the woman continues to farm it normally. But she is required to furnish [593] food as if there had been no rupture. This is why men who do [241] not trust their wives insist on cutting the clearing on land of their own lineage.

Many women wait to divorce their husbands until after they have cut the year's clearing! In January, 1957, upon the return of the border-fixing mission from the southern frontier, /155/ one of us heard M..., a woman of about 40, speak in these terms of her husband T..., 60 years old, who had done everything for her and still used to come to take part in laborious jobs to procure money for her: "He is getting old; I am going to have to look for another."

Observation at Maripasoula, Nov. 5, 1956.

Mutété, boatman of the Maripasoula post, laments in front of his comrades: his wife has just had him notified, without indicating any motive, that she was breaking with him. She did not even disturb herself to tell him so, and she waited until he had finished cutting the year's clearing for her! His [562] comrades once more expressed their rancor against the avarice, spitefulness, and inconstancy of Boni women, inferior beings whom they had once and for all given up trying to understand.

Among the Refugee Blacks people divorce at any age, at 70 years as well as at 18. Thus it is that Captain Diolé (+1951), head of the Dju lo, and his wife Efa, of the Papaïston lo, divorced each other about 1940 when both were approaching 70 and had remained together more than 35 years: in growing old their natures no longer hit it off.

/156 cont./

586 [128] The estimate of the average number of divorces for women born before 1896 is probably lower than the actual number, their first divorces not being well known to our informants. It is probably in the neighborhood of two.

586 593 178 The increase in frequency of divorces among young women is striking. It is related to the weakening of the authority, very strong in former times, exercised by mothers over their daughters. Here are two examples concerning two girls we have known since their childhood.

836 Lomé (L2, F74, Boniville) born in 1938, began to cause people to talk about her in 1954. She was deflowered by N..., who did not want to marry her. Then she had relations with Asadam (K, Boniville), who did not want to marry her either. She was beaten; she continued to see him. Now this is extremely shameful for a girl because it is placing herself in a state [558] of inferiority with respect to a man, when her self-respect consists in making a contract between equals.

582 Her brother Amèmbé beat her, and she ended up by marrying Pitipiti (Aw.B.2, Asisi village), who formally asked 586 for her in marriage in 1956. This marriage lasted less than a 587 year. In 1957 Lomé divorced him to marry Djoni (Kotika village).

584 Aguba (D,u, G14), girl of Asisi-Dju village, born in 1941, had been proposed to with the customary formalities in May, 1956 by Païtiki (L2, Loka village), a young man of 18. It was 584 agreed that the engaged couple would wait two years. But 585 Païtiki did not wait and consummated the marriage clandestine- [429] ly at the end of a few months. Lènga, Aguba's aunt and guardian, became very angry and beat her. She did not give her the pagi until May, 1957. The marriage lasted only a few 586 months. /157/ By the end of 1957 Aguba was breaking off with Païtiki and beginning openly to look for adventures.

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539 During the night he got up and went and untied the ox which escaped into the bush.

The next day he said to the bachia: "Bachia, please go and get my ox." The bachia looked for it in vain. He said: "Anansi, the ox has escaped into the bush." We shall give you another." -- "That won't do," said Anansi; "I was passing by on the river and you called me without any reason. Give me the dead child."

They said: "Uncle Anansi, we cannot give him to you, he is already in the coffin." "Let's make an end of it," said Anansi, "you are provoking me." The bachia went to tell the mother (of the dead child) that a misfortune had arrived(1).

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1. It is to be noted that it is not from the lineage head that one asks for authorization to dispose of the body, but from the mother alone.

She agreed to it. They broke the coffin and gave the body to Anansi. He put it in the bow of the boat and paddled until he came to a big bend in the river. Once out of sight of the village people, he /281/ made a little paddle. He went to the bow seat of the boat, he fastened the dead child to it with glue. He put the body in a sitting position, as if it were alive, he fastened the paddle in its hand.

He paddled until he heard something like the noise of a boat. He said to himself: "Listen, stand up, perhaps a boat is coming." He placed the boat in the strongest part of the current, he paddled hard, standing in the stern. He heard better, he said: "It is a ship." He shouted: "Ah, ah! Today I meet thee, thou whom I sought for so long." He saw clearly that it was a ship. Comrades, he paddled in the current; the

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754 556 441 438 366 In that can doubtless be seen the most likely explanation of the absence, in the tribes of Refugee Blacks, of any internal trade. There are not even markets in the villages. In practice only Creole and Asian traders are patronized.

463 829 [438] The repugnance which the Refugee Blacks have for trading with one another contributes toward preventing the development of specialized professions among them. Specialization does actually exist: one man is particularly good at building boats, another is a competent carpenter, still another devotes himself mainly to fishing; but the Refugee Blacks exercise these specialties with respect to other peoples and not with respect to one another. Nobody fails to build his own boat, his house, to cut his clearings himself. If it were otherwise, classes and castes would rapidly be created, and that is precisely what the

463 829 593 182 461 moral law of the Refugee Blacks condemns. A special effect of this conception is to preserve family custom from deteriorating, by preventing the rich from becoming great polygamists maintaining idle mistresses. We have never heard it said that a richer man paid someone to perform for him the customary work he owes to his wives, clearings, house, boat. Whatever his wealth may be, he continues to do these jobs by the sweat of his brow, and that contributes toward maintaining in its meaning and value the tacit contract concluded between husband and wife.

182 157 433 648 Thus the geographic conditions, associated with influences of a social and psychological order, impose on the Refugee Blacks a unique economy, based on a symbiosis with the coast populations in the form of piece-work or temporary wage-earning.